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Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

31 August 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: David Mack, Director
Lebanon, Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic
Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Department of State

FROM:

Chief, Geography Division, OGI

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SUBJECT:

Alleged Israeli Boundary Changes in
South Lebanon

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1. Attached is a memorandum concerning recent Israeli activity in the Lebanon-Israel border region. This memorandum,

[redacted] is for your use in providing intelligence to officials in the United States Embassies and the United Nations.

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2. The research and analysis for the text and graphics were done by [redacted] the Near East Branch, Geography Division, Office of Global Issues.

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3. If you have any questions concerning this memorandum, please call me [redacted]

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NGA Review Completed

Attachment:

Alleged Israeli Boundary Changes
in Southern Lebanon

[redacted] GI M 84-10150, August 1984

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SUBJECT: Alleged Israeli Boundaries Changes in Southern Lebanon [redacted]

OGI/GD/NE/ [redacted] (31 August 1984)

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31 August 1984

Alleged Israeli Boundary Changes in South LebanonSummary

Recent charges have been made by Lebanese officials and the press that Israel has changed boundary fences in South Lebanon to facilitate "stealing" water from the Wazzani Spring and the Nahr al Litani (Litani River). The Lebanese claim the boundary fences have been moved from 3 to 5 kilometers into Lebanon. They also accuse Israel of building a fence around the Wazzani Spring so that the spring can be used as the terminus of a tunnel from the Litani River. The charges gained credibility on 14 August when a UNIFIL detachment was denied access to the Wazzani Spring to investigate. The Israelis later claimed that their local commander was merely repairing an existing fence. On August 26th, a UN team was permitted to visit the Wazzani site and found no evidence of new roads, water diversions, fences, or adjustments of the boundary.

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Since the 1982 invasion, Israel has erected some fences and built and resurfaced roads inside Lebanon, but has not made significant changes in the boundary. One of the improved roads crosses the Nahr al Hasbani (Hasbani River) near the Wazzani Spring and follows along the western side of the Hasbani to the Israel-Lebanon boundary. None of the fences or roads appear to be associated with taking water from either the Litani River or the Wazzani Spring.

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Geography Division, Office of Global Issues. The information contained herein is updated to 31 Aug 1984. Comments may be directed to Chief, Geography Division, [redacted]

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The Litani River

The Lebanese fear Israeli intentions concerning Litani River water and have periodically charged that construction of a tunnel is underway to steal the water. The Israelis have long coveted the Litani and have made contingency plans to divert water southward from the river but claim they would seek Lebanese approval before starting the project. The failure of Lebanon to use all the Litani water has led some Israeli officials to suggest that an agreement could be made to sell the water that now flows unused into the Mediterranean Sea. Lebanon has consistently opposed any diversion of Litani water to Israel and refused suggestions to sell any of the water. Lebanon blames the Israeli invasion and occupation of South Lebanon for its inability to complete development plans for the Litani that would permit full utilization of the water.

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[redacted] the diversion of Litani water to Israel is technically feasible and could be accomplished in a year's time with a 3 to 6 kilometer tunnel, depending on the route. The longer tunnel would permit connection to a gravity flow system--a shorter tunnel would require pumping. The diversion of Litani water to the Wazzani Spring has not been mentioned before the most recent allegations; such a tunnel/canal would be about 11 kilometers long.

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Wazzani Spring

The Wazzani Spring is the principal water source for the lower Hasbani River in Lebanon and its name is often substituted for the Hasbani. Water from the Wazzani enters the Hasbani from Lebanese territory on the right (west) bank of the stream and flows downriver into Israel where it feeds the Jordan River system. The spring rises only a few meters west of the Hasbani bank, in the narrow floodplain at the bottom of the entrenched river valley. The spring flows in a separate channel parallel to the Hasbani for a short distance before entering the main stream.

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The Wazzani Spring is not surrounded by a fence. Fencing by Israel is unnecessary because Lebanon uses little of the water and both sides of the river below the spring are controlled by the IDF. The only Wazzani water used inside Lebanon is piped up from the spring to the small village of Arab al Luwayzah, on a bluff overlooking the west bank.

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The Boundary

Israel exercises total control over the boundary but has made no major changes in its alignment. Most of the Israel-Lebanon boundary is an armistice line that dates to March, 1949 and follows a boundary that was demarcated in 1922 by a mixed Anglo-French Commission. Israel has made only slight adjustments in the armistice line over the years to accommodate changes in

the roads or new fencing. In the east, where the armistice line ends at the Hasbani River, it meets the former Lebanon-Syria boundary along the northern side of the Israeli occupied Golan Heights. [redacted]

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The Wazzani Spring is astride the undemarcated boundary between Lebanon and the Golan Heights. This boundary is based on old internal boundaries from the Ottoman Empire that were rather vaguely delineated in Lebanon's first constitution in 1926 and its revision in 1943. In 1958, a Lebanon-Syria Mixed Boundary Commission, consisting of representatives from both countries, was established to delimit a boundary, but the Commission did not reach an agreement. [redacted]

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The traditional undemarcated boundary splits the Alawite village of Al Ghajar. The northern part of the village, usually referred to as Al Wazzani, was inside Lebanon. The village was reunited when Syria moved the boundary northward in 1963 to facilitate the digging of a canal from the Wazzani Spring to the Syrian-occupied Golan Heights. Israel has used this de facto boundary since 1967. [redacted]

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To the south of Al Ghajar, the Hasbani (Wazzani) River is considered to be the boundary by the United States Government, based on 1964 Lebanese 1:50,000 maps. Some maps, including all large-scale Israeli maps, show the boundary up on the western bank overlooking the river bed, in places about 500 meters from the river channel. Israel probably claims this narrow strip, but has not erected boundary fences or built a road here such as it has along the rest of the Lebanon-Israel boundary. [redacted]

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Wazzānī Spring: Lebanon Border Area



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